



Augustine Deformed: Love, Sin, and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition

John M. Rist

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Augustine established a moral framework that dominated Western culture for more than a thousand years. His partly flawed presentation of some of its key concepts (love, will and freedom), however, prompted subsequent thinkers to attempt to repair this framework, and their efforts often aggravated the very problems they intended to solve. Over time, dissatisfaction with an imperfect Augustinian theology gave way to increasingly secular and eventually impersonal moral systems. This volume traces the distortion of Augustine's thought from the twelfth century to the present and examines its consequent reconstructions. John M. Rist argues that modern philosophies should be recognized as offering no compelling answers to questions about the human condition and as leading inevitably to conventionalism or nihilism. In order to avoid this end, he proposes a return to an updated Augustinian Christianity. Essential reading for anyone interested in Augustine and his influence, *Augustine Deformed* revitalizes his original conception of love, will and freedom.

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